(Qty. in million tonnes)

Year	Demand	Production
1995-96	21.29	21.40
1996-97	22.12	22.72
1997-98	22.63	23.37

At present, there is no shortage of most items of steel. Supply/availability of steel to all segments of the consuming sectors has been adequate. To supplement domestic availability both in terms of quantity and quality, import of all items of steel is freelv allowed as per policy. However, Indian Steel Producers have been taking continuous steps to meet the requirements of the domestic consumers which include upgradation of technology, improvement in productivity and yields, improvement in quality of products and adopting the product mix to the requirement of the consumers.

Closure of Uneconomic Units of SAIL

115. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited has decided to hive off uneconomic units and concentrate only on core areas;

(b) whether the uneconomic units have been identified, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the interests of the employees
in those units would he safeguaided; and

(d) what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) and (b) Preliminary work to identify uneconomic units in non-core areas has been undertaken by SAIL. However, no final decision has been taken.

(c) and (d) Interest of employees would be safeguarded.

Issuing of licences for Import of Steel Scrap

116. PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gross irregularities in the licences to import steel scrap worth crores of rupees i>y Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) have come to light;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the outcome of the enquiry, if any, conducted by Government in the matter; and

(d) the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) to (d) Reports alleging irregularities etc. regarding the sale/ transfer of Advance Import Licences by Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) had appeared in certain sections of the Press. The Department of Steel also received representations on the same subject. An independent enquiry to look into the sale/ transfer of Advance Import Licences by various PSUs including SAIL, under Department of Steel, was set up. The enquiry report has since been submitted. No gross irregularities were established on the part of SAIL in the enquiry. However, the enquiry report pointed out inadequate action by SAIL on some counts. Follow up action on the enquiry report has been initiated. The subject matter of the question is, at present, subjudice.

खान दुर्घटनाएं

117. **श्री नरेश यादव** : क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच हैं कि देश में खान दुर्घटनाओं में तेजी से वृद्वि हुई हैं जिसके परिणामस्वरूप जान माल के नुकसान में वृद्वि हुई हैं:

(ख) गत पांच वर्षो के दौरान कितनी दुर्घटनाएं हुई हैं और इन दुर्घटनाओं में कितने लोग मारे गए;

(ग) मृतकों के परिवारों को कितना मुआवजा दिया गया हैं;

(घ) क्या अधिक संसाधन जुटा कर और बेहतर प्रौद्योगिकी का इस्तेमाल कर के इस प्रणाली को अधिक कारगार बनाने के संबंध में कोई योजना बनाई गई हैं; और

(ड.) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या हैं?

इस्पात तथा खान मंत्री (श्री नवीन पटनायक) : (क) देश में खान दुर्घटनाओं में तेजी से वृद्वि नहीं हुई हैं।

(ख) गत 5 वर्षो के दौरान हुई दुर्घटनाओं की संख्या तथा इन दुर्घटनाओं में मारे गए तथा गंभीर रूप से घायल